

Remarks

Applicants by this Amendment have cancelled claims 1, 2 and 10; amended claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 11 and 14; and have added new dependent claims 20-34. Therefore, after entry of this Amendment, claims 3-9 and 11-34 are pending. Applicants note that claims 1, 2 and 10 have been cancelled without prejudice to Applicants' right to pursue these claims in another application. The Examiner's rejections and objections are addressed below in the order in which they were raised in the Office Action mailed on April 16, 2003.

The 35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 4-8 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,942,880 ("Slovak"). As discussed below, to expedite allowance of this application, Applicants have amended the claims such that this rejection is moot. However, again, the cancellation of claims 1, 2 and 10 is done without prejudice to Applicants' right to prosecute these claims in another application.

The 35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 9 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable U.S. Patent No. 4,942,880 ("Slovak") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,393,317 ("Fukuda"). As discussed below, to expedite allowance of this application, Applicants have amended the claims such that this rejection is moot. However, the direct or indirect amendment to claims 9 and 15 to change their dependencies is done without prejudice to Applicants' right to prosecute these claims in another application.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has allowed claims 17-19 and has only objected to claims 3, 11-14 and 16 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Claim 3 has been rewritten to incorporate all of the limitations of claims 1 and 2 and is now in condition for allowance. Moreover, claims 4, 6 and 7 have been amended to change their dependencies to claim 3, which places these claims, as well as claim 5, which depends from claim 4, and claims 8 and 9, which depend from claim 7, in condition for allowance.

Claims 11 and 14 have each been rewritten to incorporate all of the limitations of claims 1 and 10 and are now in condition for allowance. Claims 12 and 13 depend from

claim 11, and therefore, require no amendment. Claims 15 and 16 have been amended to depend from claim 11 and are in condition for allowance. Similarly, new claims 33 and 34 are dependent upon claim 14 and are in condition for allowance.

The remaining new claims 20-32 are all dependent upon allowed claim 17 and are, therefore, in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request a timely Notice of Allowance in this application. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney if a telephone call could help resolve any remaining items.


Applicants have separately authorized the payment of the fee due for the new claims. Otherwise, Applicants believe that no fee is due with this submission. However, if it is determined that a fee is due, please charge the required fee to Pennie & Edmonds LLP Deposit Account No. 16-1150. A copy of this sheet is enclosed for this purpose.

Respectfully submitted,

PENNIE & EDMONDS LLP

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